

Michigan Township **INSIGHTS**

March 3, 2023

More than 200 township leaders attend MTA's 2023 Capital Conference

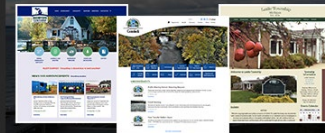
More than 200 township officials from across the state convened this week for MTA's 2023 Capital Conference to gather insights and information on key township issues at the forefront in Lansing, including the need for investments in local communities, preservation of local control and modernizing local governance. MTA Executive Director Neil Sheridan told attendees, "Legislation eroding local control and preempting township authority is introduced and debated every day at the Capitol. We need your help to ensure that townships can continue to provide valued and essential services to more than half of Michigan's residents."



The event allowed attendees to hear firsthand from experts on critical issues that will impact townships and their residents. The general sessions explored two topics impacting townships in all areas of the state: an overview from the state Bureau of Elections of the changes to local elections due to Proposal 2022-2, followed by considerations and available resources when considering renewable energy projects shared by expert Dr. Sarah Banas Mills from the University of Michigan. Members networked with the legislators at lunch to share their perspectives and experiences with lawmakers and legislative staff. Afternoon sessions included state efforts to improve access to broadband, an update on the new Part 115 changes to state solid waste laws, transportation funding and marijuana regulation. The event concluded with a panel of legislators who held township office prior to their election to statewide office, sharing their experiences at both the local and state level and advice for engaging with state leaders. Panelists included Sens. Kevin Daley (R-Arcadia Twp.) and Sue Shink (D-Northfield Twp.) and Reps. Julie Brixie (D-Meridian Chtr. Twp.) and Donni Steele (D-Orion Chtr. Twp.).

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[Now You Know](#)

** March 10 [Legislative](#)

[Update](#)

[2023 Annual Conference & Expo](#) (April 17-20)

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Income tax changes headed to governor

Changes on how retirement and pension income is taxed, increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit and potential mechanism for providing rebate checks to each tax filer is now headed to Gov. Whitmer for signature. [House Bill 4001](#), sponsored by Rep. Angela Witwer (D-Delta Charter Twp.), passed the Legislature two weeks ago without immediate effect but was not forwarded to the governor. Without immediate effect, the provisions will not be effective until 90 days after the Legislature adjourns for the year.

Communities could recoup law enforcement training costs under bill

Law enforcement agencies would be able to enter into agreements to collect the costs of law enforcement training if an employee voluntarily leaves employment within the first four years of employment with that agency. Under [Senate Bill 32](#), sponsored by Sen. Sylvia Santana (D-Detroit), if an employee left within the first year, 100% of the cost of the training academy could be recouped. This percentage decreases by 25% increments each year until the employee has been employed for four years. The bill now moves to the full Senate for action.

Bill expanding protections for LGBTQ individuals moves to House

Legislation codifying both a 2018 Michigan Civil Rights Commission interpretative statement and a 2022 court ruling passed the Senate this week. [Senate Bill 4](#), sponsored by Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield), expands the state's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination based on someone's sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in employment, public accommodations, public services and housing. The bill now goes to the House for further consideration.

Townships: Please review pension system data

Townships are asked to review your unit's pension system data to determine if you are eligible for the Protecting MI Grant program—a program to help Michigan's underfunded municipal pension systems. The local grant program is available for qualified pension systems with a funded ratio below 60%, as defined in the [Protecting Local Government Retirement and Benefits Act](#).

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MTA Educational Conference & Expo

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View the [preliminary list of Michigan pension systems with a funded ratio of less than 60% as of December 31, 2021](#). This funded ratio was previously reported on the Retirement System Annual Report (Form 5572) submitted to the state Department of Treasury. **If you believe the funded ratio is inaccurate or your qualified retirement system is missing from this list, complete the [Pension Data Discrepancy Form](#) and submit by March 31.** Comments, questions or discrepancies should be submitted to Treasury-MIPensionGrant@Michigan.gov by **March 31**.

Learn more about the program, including grant criteria, timelines, qualification information, and an estimated list of eligible local governments on the [state Bureau of Local Government and School Services website](#). A webinar will be scheduled for late-March/early April 2023. Updates on additional program guidelines, application materials and frequently asked questions related to this grant program will be provided on the website program guidelines and application materials will be posted no later than **April 15**.

Attend MIHI Connected Future Listening Tour meeting

To assist in providing affordable high-speed internet service across the state, the Michigan High-Speed Internet (MIHI) office is continuing the [MI Connected Future Listening Tour](#). Michigan is poised to receive more than \$1.6 billion from the federal government to expand high-speed internet service and achieve digital equity. Every region and every community in our state has unique needs when it comes to getting everyone connected, and it is critical that the MIHI office hears from you and your community. Join one of the in-person community meetings being held in each region of the state ([learn more about what you can expect as an attendee in a short video here](#)). [Register for an event near you:](#)

- Lapeer: March 7, 4-6 p.m.
- Marysville: March 9, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
- Bad Axe: March 14, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Saginaw: March 21, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Mt. Pleasant: March 23, 4-6 p.m.
- Alma/Ithaca: March 28, 2-4 p.m.
- Hastings: March 30, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Muskegon: April 11, 4-6 p.m.

* [Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler, P.C.](#)

* [Mika Meyers, PLC](#)



- Baldwin: April 12, 5-7 p.m.
 - West Branch: April 18, 5-7 p.m.
 - Mio: April 20, 5-7 p.m.
 - Rogers City: April 26, 5-7 p.m.
 - Cadillac: May 10, 4-6 p.m.
 - Garfield Chtr. Twp./Traverse City: May 11, 4-6 p.m.
 - Watersmeet: May 16, 5-7 p.m.
-

Adult-use marijuana payments distributed

More than \$59.5 million is [being distributed](#) among 224 municipalities and counties—81 cities, 53 townships, 26 villages and 64 counties—from the Marijuana Regulation Fund as part of the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act. Each eligible municipality and county will receive more than \$51,800 for every licensed retail store and microbusiness located within its jurisdiction. For the 2022 state fiscal year, \$198.4 million were available for distribution from the Marijuana Regulation Fund.

STC offers June MCAT course

Applications are being accepted for a Michigan Certified Assessing Technician (MCAT) program, held **June 1-2**, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., at the Novi Council Chambers, with the exam set for June 5 at 9 a.m. Applications are available on the [State Tax Commission \(STC\) website](#) and completed applications must be received by the STC no later than May 12. Direct questions to GastW@michigan.gov.

Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) program updates

ROBIN program: MIHI's first high-speed internet infrastructure grant program is now open for applications. The Realizing Opportunity with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN) Program will provide \$238 million in grants to build new high-speed internet networks to unserved locations across the state. The application window closes on Tuesday, March 14. [Click here for information about ROBIN.](#)

Digital inclusion providers: MIHI is creating an inventory of organizations and facilities that are providing digital inclusion services. If you provide public access to computers, digital literacy training, cybersafety training or other similar services,

[join their growing database of practitioners and providers across the state.](#)

Broadband discounts: Michigan is one of the top states for [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) (ACP) enrollment from the Federal Communications Commission, but more than 50% of eligible households are not enrolled. The ACP provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer or tablet from participating providers. Eligible households can [enroll through a participating broadband provider](#) or directly with the Universal Service Administrative Company using a mail-in or [online application](#).

Digital inclusion programs: The MIHI Office, in partnership with the Michigan Poverty Taskforce, has gathered and published a library of resources, case examples and guides to creating local, community-driven digital inclusion programs. [Find the digital inclusion resources.](#)

Free security app: Protect the important devices and people in your life with Michigan Secure, the free security app only for Michigan residents. Michigan Secure helps protect you from unsecure Wi-Fi networks, phishing emails, unsafe apps and more. [Learn more about Michigan Secure.](#)

Grants and other funding opportunities from EGLE

Townships can apply for the following opportunities released this week by state Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE):

- [Building Upgrade Prize](#) aims to accelerate widespread, equitable efficiency and building electrification upgrades. Submissions are due by **July 18**.
- [Energizing Rural Communities Prize](#) will award \$15 million in prizes to help rural or remote communities improve their energy systems and advance clean energy demonstration projects. Applications are due by **May 24**. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) also provides funding opportunities.
- [USDA Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program](#) provides low-interest loans to rural communities that need funding for water infrastructure projects.

- [USDA Community Facilities Program](#) provides grants, loans, and loan guarantees for equipment for community facilities, including energy equipment like solar panels.

For a list of other energy-related federal grants currently open or opening soon, visit EGLE's [Federal Funding Technical Assistance](#) webpage. One-on-one technical assistance to help identify and apply for grants is available; contact (kate@katemadigan.com), a consultant working with EGLE.

Arts grants available

Townships can apply now for one of [several grants](#) available from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council aiming help ensure that every citizen and community in Michigan enjoys the civic, economic and educational benefits of arts and culture. This funding cycle will cover projects taking place between Oct. 1, 2023 - Sept. 30, 2024. The deadline for most applications is **June 1**.

Get half-off MTA's online training throughout March



MTA's [Online Learning Center](#) is home to a wide variety of webinars all designed with township officials in mind. From assessing to zoning, you're sure to find something for everyone on your township team. MTA recognizes how valuable your time is, that's why we record our classes. We also strive to provide value, so this month you'll receive 50% off these recorded classes. Choose from dozens of topics and watch on-demand at your convenience. Visit learn.michigantownships.org to get started; use discount code **MARCH** when you check out.

Revised weight restrictions imposed

Effective 6 a.m. Monday, March 6, weight restrictions will be imposed and enforced on all state trunkline highways within the following areas of Michigan:

- Highways north of a line on M-46 in Muskegon County from the US-31 Business Route in the city of Muskegon, then east to US-131, then north on US-131 to M-46, then east to the intersection of M-25 in Port Sanilac (Sanilac County).

- Highways south of a line on M-55 from the US-31 intersection in Manistee County east to M-66 in Missaukee County, then north on M-66 to M-55 in Missaukee County, then east on M-55 to the intersection of US-23 in Tawas in Iosco County.
- All state trunk lines between these two lines will have weight restrictions imposed and enforced. State routes typically carry M, I or US designations.

In the restricted areas, the following will apply:

- On routes designated as "all-season" (designated in green and gold on the MDOT Truck Operators Map), there will be no reduction in legal axle weights.
- On routes designated as "seasonal" (designated in solid or dashed red on the MDOT Truck Operators Map), there will be a posted weight reduction of 25% for rigid (concrete) pavements and 35% for flexible (asphalt) pavements.
- All extended permits will be valid for oversize loads in the weight-restricted area on the restricted routes. Single-trip permits will not be issued for any overweight loads or loads exceeding 14 feet in width, 11 axles, and 150 feet in overall length on the restricted routes.

For weight restriction information and updates, call 800-787-8960, or access on [MDOT's website](#) under "Restrictions and Conditions." All-season routes are designated in green and gold on the [MDOT Truck Operators Map](#).

Federal update for week of Feb. 26

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships' *Weekly Legislative Update* [e-newsletter](#) for an update of federal actions impacting townships.

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